

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01253 091330Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 INT-05 DOE-15
SOE-02 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-07 CEA-01 DODE-00 PA-01
/135 W

-----050518 091333Z /46

R 091145Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9483
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMDMBASSY MADRID 545
AMEMBASSY PAIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USDOC WASHDC
USCINCEUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NOUAKCHOTT 1253

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, MOPS, SS, MR
SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN IRON ORE PRODUCTION

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 542

1. ON MAY 5 THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SNIM, ISMAIL OULD AMAR,
TOLD ME THAT RAIL SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE FROM THE MINES AT
ZOUERATE TO MINERAL PORT AT NOIDHIBOU WERE ONLY 300,000 TONS
IN APRIL, A FIGURE FAR BLOW THAT REQUIRED TO MEET ANNUAL
7.5 MILLION TON BREAK-EVEN POINT, NOT TO MENTION 8.5 MILLION
TON GOAL FOR 1978 MENTIONED IN JANUARY. AMAR DESCRIBED THE
SITUATION, WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM A COMBINATION OF POLISARIO
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SABOTAGE OF MINERAL TRAIN AND BREAKDOWN OF MAJOR CRUSHER AT
ZOUERATE AS "EXTREMELY SERIOUS". AMAR PRIVATELY CONCEDED
AT PRESENT RATES OF PRODUCTION, A TOTAL OF 6 MILLION TONS
THIS YEAR MIGHT BE A MORE REALISTIC FIGURE.

2. COMMENT: WHILE THIS YEAR'S EXPORT LOSSES IN IRON ORE
PRODUCTION WILL REPORTEDLY BE OFFSET BY THE TITLE II STABEX

PROVISION OF THE LOME CONVENTION (REFTEL), THE SHORTFALL IS
QUITE LIKELY (THROUGH A LOWERING OF THE 5-YEAR AVERAGE FIGURE
ON WHICH THE COMPENSATING PAYMENTS ARE BASED) TO PROVE COSTLY
OVER THE LONG RUN. DURING MY VISIT TO INTERIOR APRIL 23-27,
I OBSERVED DAMAGED FREIGHT CARS AND ORE STILL IN PLACE FROM
LAST FEB 25 POLISARIO STIKE AT CANSADO, 5 KILOMETERS FROM
NOUADHIBOU, AND AT SHOUM MARCH 25.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT AMAR, WHO HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED HIS
GOAL OF KEEPING THE TRAINS RUNNING AT ALL COSTS, IS
HAVING HIS PROBLEMS. DECISION TO CLOSE THE IMPRESSIVE VOCA-
TIONAL SCHOOL (CENTRE D'APPRENTISSAGE ET DE FORMATION D'AGENTS
DE MAITRISE DE NOUADHIBOU - CAFAM), A MODERN AND IMPRESSIVE
TRAINING CENTER FOR MAURITANINS OF WHICH HE WAS JUSTIFIABLY
PROUD, ESULTED FROM GRIM REVENUE PICTURE, AND EVEN FURTHER
SACRIFICES WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE NECESSARY IF ATTACKS CONTINUE.

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